Meal Periods and Breaks

Purpose

To support and clarify the current institutional policy on meal periods, breaks and smoking within the Department of Respiratory Care Services.

Policy

Meal Periods

- Any employee working six or more hours per day will be granted one meal period of 30 minutes.
- With supervisory approval and based on workloads, employees will be paid for all time worked if workloads prevent granting a meal period.
- If workloads allow, departments may schedule break periods of up to 15 minutes for every four hours worked per day. Such break periods are considered time worked, and employees will be paid for such time.
- Breaks cannot be contiguous with arrival, departure, or meal times.
- Nursing mothers are allowed to leave their work areas to go to a private space to address lactation needs with advance approval from their supervisor.

Smoking/ Outside Breaks

- All employees and students at UTMB will be prohibited from smoking in any facility used by UTMB, including buildings, hospitals, vehicles, and leased space.
- Appropriate signs will be posted conveying the current policy on smoking in conspicuous locations throughout the department and institution.
- If workloads permit, supervisors *may allow* for break periods of up to 15 minutes for every four hours worked for staff to smoke or take an outside break. To ensure appropriate and safe staffing levels, therapists requesting to leave their assigned area must comply with the following guidelines:
    - The therapist must contact the supervisor and request a smoke break
    - If granted, the therapist must communicate *exactly* when they leave their assigned area *and* when they return
    - No more than 2 therapists can be away from *any* patient care area at any given time
- All personnel found in violation of this policy are subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

References

IHOP Policy 3.1.7 Work Schedules and Work Week
IHOP Policy 3.7.6 Tobacco Free Policy